

WILLIAM HENRY SMITH was born in Kentucky, October 30, 1835. Three years later, in 1838, in the "moving wagon" of his parents, Willis and Phoebe Smith, he passed through Pinckneyville (then a little village) whose first Court House, a log cabin, 18X22 feet in size on the Bank Block, was just ending its service of ten years, giving place to a two story brick structure, which, in its turn lasted ten years, giving way to a second brick building which thirty years later was re-built and enlarged by Wm. G. Wilson, with our Bre. Wm. H. Smith as one of the sureties on his bond as Contractor, and in which Bro. Smith afterwards sat as a member of the County Board.

Bro. Smith with his family moved into town in the seventies--returned to the old home near the Oak Grove Church for a few years, and again located near the public square, and pursued his business as a dealer in farm implements, serving a term as Mayor about ten years ago.

As a citizen, few have been more highly respected for his genuine reliability.

His early life was, doubtless, one of hardships--the family having undertaken the task of making a fine large farm in the heavily timbered region. There were eleven in this family.

The recent visit of Mr. Asa Hill recalls the family history. After the death of the father, Willis Smith, (whose brother, Amos Smith survived him) the mother, Phoebe, married Mr. Asa Hill, and they became the parents of Mary Hill (now the widow of Greyel Pursell, deceased) and of Benjamin and Asa Hill. These families recently enjoyed a pleasant reunion at the Fair Ground, which the subject of this sketch was unable to attend.

Bro. Smith's sisters were: Nancy, wife of our aged brother John C. Keene; Josephine, who married Albert Vineyard, and was the mother of the well-known Vineyard family, and as widow of Albert Helvey, died within the past year.; Ruth M'Clurkin.; Eliza M'Clurkin; Emoline King; Julia Taylor, who was the wife of Jas. Taylor; Catherine; and Sallie, who died in childhood, as did also a little brother Remus Smith.

Thus, his family connection was a large one, and his own family consisted of Frank and Willis, who died in early childhood; Crede P. Smith; Willard Smith; Addie, who married Manford Lemmon, and died in 1902; Fannie, wife of John H. Miller; John and Broaddus (both deceased); Charles, who also died in 1902, leaving a family; and Harry and Scott Smith; eleven children in all, and the aged widow, their mother, to whom he was married on Sept. 20, 1857 more than fifty-six years ago. She is one of the seven daughters of Wm. Davis, who was a pioneer in his neighborhood, and, in some respects, its venerable father. She is a sister of John S. Davis of this place.

Through successive deaths in the family connection, the burden of caring for children, other than their own, has fallen upon Bro. and Sister Smith, and right nobly have they served their generation in this labor of love and self-sacrifice. Many, in days to come, will rise up and call them blessed.

True religion, in the heart and in the home, dominated the life of this worthy couple, who are not now to be long separated by the little river of death.

Bro. Smith was eight years old when, in 1843, four Baptists, Bryant West, David Huggins and wife, and Sister Roach were constituted the "Swanwick Baptist Church" near Oak Grove. Its membership grew to about fifty, and "Uncle Billy Davis" was its clerk. In 1857 it ceased to exist. In 1864 (March 5) the same William Davis and Sarah, his wife; Enoch Taylor and Nancy J., his wife; Wm. H. Smith and Margaret J., his wife; John H. Richmond; Judith K. Presswood; Amy M. Keene, Louisa M'Clurkin and Phoebe Hill (the mother of our Bro. Smith); eleven persons in all, were constituted the "Oak Grove Baptist Church." Bro. John C. Wilson, not then ordained, was the first pastor, and Bro. Smith was its clerk for fifteen years. Their first house of worship was a log cabin of round logs, then a larger hewed log house served them until, in 1886, their present house was built.

Bro. Smith was ordained a deacon in May 1870, was a member of this Pinckneyville church in 1879-1880, and afterwards, continuously from Aug. 2, 1896 to the hour of his death, 1:00 P. M., Oct. 16, 1913, when he closed his long and faithful service as member and servant of these three churches. For several years past, was President of the Board of Deacons, and a wise counselor.

His profession of faith in Christ was made early in life, being baptized by Eld. Daird Huggins into the fellowship of the Swanwick Baptist Church, and his life was always consistent with his profession.

The writer of this sketch bears this testimony upon an intimate acquaintance of almost forty-eight years.

W. S. D. Smith